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DREADFUL NEWS from TAUNTON-DEAN.

God's Judgment

AGAINST

JEALOUS PERSONS;

Being the whole Account of the most horrid

MURDER

COMMITTED BY

Sir William Watts,

Who most cruelly Murdered

His Lady and two small Children,

For which he was Tried and Cast at the last Assizes, and executed for the same. With the solemn

Declaration he made at the Place of Execution;

and the Substance of a

Sermon preached by the Rev. Mr. Butler.

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God's Just Judgments, &c.

IN the parish of Milverton, near Taunton, in Somersetshire, lived one Sir William Watts, a gentleman of a very good estate, about 28 years of age. He married a very beautiful young woman in that neighbourhood, by whom he had three children, and they lived very lovingly together for several years, till the Devil raised such a spirit of jealousy in him, that he could not rest day nor night; for the love that he formerly bore to her turned into hatred and malice, and oftentimes he would beat and abuse her in a very inhuman manner, saying, the children she bare to him were all of them bastards, and none of his; and would often threaten to murder her and her

bastards, to the great grief of the poor tender mother, who would often strive to pacify him, affirming, that she was as innocent as the child unborn; but all was to no purpose.

One morning as he was walking out in the field, studying how he might accomplish his wicked design to murder them, the Devil appeared to him in the shape of a Nobleman, and saluted him in a very complacent manner, and after some little discourse, looking very earnestly on him, said, Sir, I perceive you are under some trouble, and therefore pray tell me what it is, and I will soon put you in a way to get rid of it. You think that your wife is a whore, and your children are all bastards, which I know to be true, for mine were the very same, but I soon got rid of that trouble, for I went home and murdered them all; and as I had a good estate beyond the seas, and a ship of my own ready to sail, I went on board and got off, where I have lived ever since very happy. Now, if you'll be ru'd by me go home, and if your wife is gone abroad, send your servant maid to call her mistress, and then kill the three children, and the whore your wife when she comes home, and then come again to this place to me. Let nothing dismay you, for I will take you on board my ship, where you shall live happy and enjoy all the pleasures this life can afford.

He then shewed him two large bags, one of silver and the other of gold; the wicked wretch took the Devil's advice, and went home with a heart full of most barbarous and bloody cruelty. where finding none but his servant maid, as the Devil had told him, he sent her to call her mistress; then taking the bloody knife in his hand, goes up stairs, where he found his three children lying fast asleep in each other's arms; and taking the youngest (being a boy) by the hair of his head, cut his throat from ear to ear, and then laid him on the floor; then taking

the youngest girl, he cut her throat in the same manner; while the eldest daughter in a most tender manner cried, O my father, why do you kill my dear brother? He told her she should die in the same manner; with that she fell upon her knees, and begged of him, for God's sake, that he would give her time to say her prayers——to which he consented.

The Child's Prayer.

O ETERNAL God, and most merciful Father, take pity on me thy child, and save me from the hands of my cruel father, who hath already killed my dear brother and sister; and preserve my dear mother out of his wicked hands, and send thy angel to hold his bloody hand, that he may not proceed further in his inhuman cruelty.

And while she was praying there was heard a mighty voice, crying out, Hold thy hand, thou bloody minded wretch, the Lord hath heard the prayers of the innocent child whom thou seekest to destroy; thou hast slain already two innocent babes, whose bloody cryeth for vengeance against thee, and thou shalt be tormented in everlasting flames; for the Devil, who hath deceived thee, can do thee no service at all.

In the mean time time the poor unfortunate wife came in, and hearing a noise, she ran up stairs, and seeing her two babes lie bleeding on the ground, she began to make an outcry, he running to her, with a long sharp pointed knife, stabbed her three times in the body, and then cut her throat from ear to ear.

By this time the neighbours, hearing the noise, came running in, and found him standing in the corner of the room, and not having power to move, they immediately seized on him, and he was sent to Taunton Gaol, and deservedly executed for the same.

His Confession.

I was born in the county of Somerset, in the parish of Milverton, near Taunton-Dean, of very honest parents, whose care was to bring me up in the fear and service of God, having no other child besides me; they dying left me a very good estate, and I married a very beautiful young woman in the neighbourhood, not much inferior to me either in birth or fortune. By her I had three fine children; but her beauty proved my ruin, and brought me, through my own jealousy, at last, to this ignominious death I am going to suffer.——I pray God preserve all people from jealousy, and not suffer them to be misled by the Devil, who made me many a great promise, telling me to kill my wife and children, and pursuading me that she was guilty of defiling my bed, and other heinous offences against me.

After desiring the prayers of all good christians, and forewarning others by his example, he was turned off.

The Substance of a Sermon

PREACHED ON THAT OCCASION

By the Rev. Mr. B TLER, from

JAMES i. v. 13, 14, 15.

"Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God, for God cannot be tempted to evil, neither tempteth he any man; but every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed; then, when lust hath conceived, it brings forth sin; and sin, when 'tis finished, bringeth forth death."

MY beloved, the words of my text ought to warn us to speedy repentance, so that we may be prepared for our latter end, by amending our lives, and living soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present life, that we may be made partakers of eternal happiness in that life to come; and, indeed, if men were so wise as to consider their latter end, it would be the chief motive to make them leave their sins and wickedness, considering that the soul never dies, but must have a being to all eternity; and that there are but two places for it to go to, either Heaven or Hell. Therefore, my beloved, let me earnestly intreat you to think of your latter end, and prepare for eternal happiness, or else you will certainly be most miserable. "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil day comes not, nor the years approach, wherein thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them." ECCLES. xii. 1. Man that is born of a woman has but a short time to live; and it highly concerns us to make good use of our time and to improve it to the best advantage of our souls; for, beloved, "the day cometh that shall burn as an oven, and all the proud, yea, and all that talketh wickedly shall be as stubble, and the day that cometh shall burn them up saith the Lord of Hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch."——— MAL. iv. 1.

Therefore let me intreat you, as you tender your happiness, not to defer your repentance 'till old age; for we see by experience, that not one in a thousand that takes that course doth ever attain unto it. The rich man, in the gospel, promised himself many years to live in ease, mirth, and fullness, when he had not one night longer to live; so many persons falsely promise themselves the age of many years, when the thread of their lives is drawn to an end. The prophet Jeremiah ascribes the cause of the Jews sin, and Jemmites, to this, that "they remembered not their latter end." And as touching this unhappy gentlemen, whom, we fear, is now under the Almighty vengeance, though we ought not positively to judge in such cases; if he had lived a more sober and temperate life, and instead of spending his precious time in drinking, and other lewd courses, had spent it in reading the scriptures, and hearing good sermons, then he had never came to such a dreadful end; and we hope this terrible example will be sufficient warning to all wicked, drunken, and profane persons, how they dare to provoke God in such an audacious manner. Sometimes being disguised in liquor he would make it a merit to go and hear a sermon, making sport at the minister's words, contradicting him, and making banter of what he heard among his lewd company. But in the midst of his prophane idolatry the judgments of God overtook him. "Those that murmur against the minister and teacher of God's word, murmur against God himself." Exod. xvi. 8. As for all such wicked and blasphemous persons, that follow such lewd courses, it is the infinite mercy of God, that they are not instantly consumed, and sunk into those torments never to have an end, "where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched." To the intent that other may take timely warning of that beastly sin of drunkenness, it is this day preached before you, and shall be published for the use of many more. The first we find in Scripture guilty of this sin is Noah, a little before he had seen the world, except eight persons, destroyed by

the flood; and then what was the consequence? why he unseemingly exposed his nakedness, and gave occasion to his youngest son to deride and despise him, which caused him to lay a grievous curse upon him, which had not been if the sin had not happened.

Therefore let me earnestly intreat you to think upon your latter end, and prepare yourselves for eternal happiness. Pray to God to give you grace, and keep you from all temptations.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God be with you all evermore.

We whose names are unto set, do certify this relation to be true, and desire that it may be published, as a timely warning to all people:

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